



Department of Health and Human Services/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Global AIDS Program (GAP)

Under the direction of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator's Office, the HHS/CDC Global AIDS Program (GAP) is a proud partner in the unified U.S. Government effort to implement the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. GAP helps resource-constrained countries prevent HIV infection; improve treatment, care, and support for people living with HIV; and build capacity and infrastructure to address the global HIV/AIDS pandemic.

About Our Work: *Treatment and Prevention of Opportunistic Infections*

How does CDC work to improve treatment and prevention of opportunistic infections (OIs)?

- ◆ Helps countries increase access to HIV counseling and testing and link HIV-positive individuals to OI prevention services.
- ◆ Helps countries develop national and regional guidelines for OI treatment and prevention.
- ◆ Trains personnel to properly diagnose, treat and prevent OIs.
- ◆ Provides essential drugs.
- ◆ Helps countries implement and evaluate OI preventive measures and programs.

As HIV increasingly compromises the immune systems of infected individuals, they become susceptible to a wide variety of opportunistic infections (OIs), many of which clinically define AIDS. In the absence of antiretroviral therapy (ART), OIs cause the majority of all AIDS-related deaths.

Among HIV-infected adults, tuberculosis (TB) is the most common serious OI in all resource-poor areas. Other common OIs include:

- ◆ pneumonia
- ◆ diarrhea
- ◆ encephalitis
- ◆ meningitis

Among HIV-infected children, pneumonia and acute bacterial infections are particularly common.

Treatment of OIs has been largely unavailable in resource-poor areas, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, because there is a scarcity of trained personnel and diagnostic facilities, and drugs to treat OIs are often unavailable or unaffordable. Clinics in rural areas, villages, and small towns are usually the most resource-constrained. However, symptom-related treatment algorithms have been developed for use in settings that lack diagnostic facilities.

Prevention of specific OIs was the primary focus of HIV care in industrialized countries before the advent of ART. Although ART is now the most effective means to prevent HIV-related illness and death, specific OI prevention remains critically important in persons who are severely immunocompromised, regardless of whether they are taking ART.

Making methods to prevent OIs more available to HIV-infected persons is a priority for the Global AIDS Program (GAP). With support from the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, a "preventive care package" has been established through a rural health project in Uganda including co-trimoxizole, an inexpensive antibiotic; safe water kits, insecticide-treated bed nets, family-centered counseling and testing for HIV. The preventive care package is also being introduced more broadly in Uganda, and GAP anticipates implementing similar programs in several other countries in the near future.

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